

Statement of

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Introduction

Good morning, Chairman Waxman, Ranking Member Davis and Members of the Committee.

I welcome the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss how the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is prepared, not only for the current 2007 Hurricane Season, but for other potentially catastrophic disasters and emergencies that may happen today and in the future.

The Federal response to the 2005 Hurricanes was a clarion call for change in disaster response and recovery for the country and all of those involved in emergency management. Based on the many lessons learned, FEMA instituted numerous reforms to improve its ability to respond to and recover from disasters. In addition to FEMA's internal transformation that we embraced to improve the agency, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA have been working closely with other components within DHS to implement the adjustments included in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA or "the Act"). The combination of FEMA's transformation and changes made by PKEMRA are resulting in a new FEMA that is stronger, more nimble and more robust than we were just a year ago.

I would like to address the changes we have made to build a new FEMA, the reforms in our planning and operations under this structure, and their effect on our preparedness.

Let me begin with the reorganization.

The New FEMA – Organization

Last fall, Congress passed and the President signed into law the FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-295), which included PKEMRA. The legislation reorganizes DHS and reconfigures FEMA to include consolidated emergency management functions, including national preparedness functions.

Significantly, and consistent with the lessons learned, the new FEMA has not simply tacked on new programs and responsibilities to an existing structure. Rather, we conducted a thorough assessment of the internal FEMA structure, including new and existing competencies and responsibilities within FEMA. On April 1 of this year, this new and expanded FEMA was formally established. This new organization reflects the expanded scope of FEMA's responsibilities—and the core competencies that we are seeking to establish and enhance. It supports a more nimble, flexible use of resources. It strengthens coordination among FEMA elements and with other DHS components. It enables FEMA to better coordinate with agencies and departments outside of DHS. It also delivers enhanced capabilities to our partners at the State, local and tribal

governments and emergency management and preparedness organizations at all levels, and engages the capabilities and strengths that reside in the private sector.

I'd like to highlight one office that joined FEMA in this reorganization -- the Office of National Capital Region Coordination whose mission is to oversee and coordinate Federal programs for and relationships with State, local and regional authorities in the National Capital Region (NCR). Chris Geldart, Director of the Office, will be speaking with you today in a later panel on this important Office's role in the new FEMA and in the NCR.

National Preparedness

Of particular note in the reorganization, the new FEMA includes a new National Preparedness Directorate, which incorporates functions related to preparedness doctrine, policy and contingency planning. It also contains the exercise coordination and evaluation program, emergency management training, the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program and the Radiological Emergency Preparedness program.

Other FEMA Headquarters Elements

In addition to preparedness, the new FEMA is sharpening the agency's focus on building core competencies in logistics, operational planning, incident management and the delivery of disaster assistance. To this end, the new structure includes:

1. *A Logistics Management* Directorate to fulfill the mandate of the revised Homeland Security Act (HSA) Section 636;
2. *A Disaster Assistance* Directorate incorporating elements of the previous FEMA Recovery Division; and
3. *A Disaster Operations* Directorate incorporating the previous FEMA Response Division and elements from the Preparedness Directorate's National Preparedness Task Force.

FEMA also has established directorates that focus more clearly on broader issues of preparedness, protection and mitigation, including the *National Continuity Programs* Directorate (formerly Office of National Security Coordination), and the *Mitigation* Directorate.

The agency also has created a number of new advocate positions or groups to provide a more comprehensive framework for emergency management.

I am pleased to report that, following consultation with appropriate groups, including disability interest groups as well as State, local and tribal groups, FEMA appointed Ms. Cindy Lou Daniel to the new position of Disability Coordinator. Ms. Daniel works with

the Disaster Assistance and Disaster Operations Directorates, ensuring that FEMA incorporates necessary provisions for the disabled as we plan, respond to, and recover from disasters. The Disability Coordinator, who reports directly to the Administrator, is charged with assessing the coordination of emergency management policies and practices with the needs of individuals with disabilities, including training, accessibility of entry, transportation, media outreach, and general coordination and dissemination of model best practices, including evacuation planning. The Disability Coordinator will work closely with the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

PKEMRA also requires FEMA to establish a National Advisory Council (Council). FEMA announced the proposed Council members on June 19, 2007. These Council members are men and women from diverse backgrounds representing State, local, and tribal entities in the public and private sectors with related experience in emergency management who can contribute to FEMA's efforts to determine how to best serve the American people. Some of the disciplines represented in the Council include professionals in emergency management and response, public health, standards setting, communications, infrastructure protection, cyber security, and special needs.

Additionally, our new structure includes a Small State and Rural Advocate who will serve as the voice for the fair treatment of smaller States and rural communities as we implement response and recovery policies.

FEMA also reorganized our internal management and support functions into offices that are better aligned to support our mission and to coordinate with our partners across all levels of government, with the non-profit community and with the private sector.

FEMA Regional Offices

Where the "rubber really meets the road" is in FEMA's regional offices. Having key leaders with the necessary experience and adequate resources to support their missions across the country is an important element of the agency's reorganization. The ten Regional Administrators report directly to me, the Administrator, and are supported by Regional Advisory Councils. The Regional Advisory Councils provide advice and recommendations to the Regional Administrators on regional emergency management issues and identify weaknesses or deficiencies in preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation for State, local and tribal governments based on their specialized knowledge of the region. We have filled all 10 Regional Administrator posts with men and women with 20 to 30 years of emergency management experience. We also are working to improve operational capabilities in the regions and will establish Incident Management Assist Teams (IMATs) in them. The IMATs will support the enhanced regions by providing a dedicated 24 x 7 organic response capability. When not deployed, IMATs will train with and enhance the emergency management capabilities of our Federal, State, local and tribal partners. IMATs are discussed in more detail under the "Building FEMA's Operational Capabilities" section of this statement.

The New FEMA – Planning and Operations and Their Impact On 2007

The result of these changes is a new FEMA that is better prepared for the future than the organization was in the past. We have a stronger organization with stronger leaders and dedicated men and women striving to serve those most in need. But these structural changes will not be meaningful unless matched with a similar change in FEMA's vision and goals. We are working diligently to reestablish America's trust and confidence in FEMA, and are focused on our vision to become the nation's preeminent emergency management and preparedness agency.

The guiding principle of this new FEMA is to lean further forward to deliver more effective disaster assistance to individuals and communities impacted by a disaster. We call it "engaged partnership." This partnership was evident in the Florida, Georgia, and Alabama tornadoes, the Nor'easter that affected the New England States, and in Kansas, where the community of Greensburg was devastated by a tornado.

In these disasters, FEMA was engaged with the State within minutes of the disaster, immediately deployed operational and technical experts to the disaster site, started moving logistics and communications capabilities even before a disaster declaration and coordinated with the Governor to facilitate a Presidential disaster declaration. Also, FEMA has supported and helped to facilitate an effective Unified Command with other Federal agencies, and State and local officials.

FEMA's support of the response operations for States impacted by large, uncontrolled wildfires is a prime example of our ability to lean forward. FEMA provides Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAGs) to States when a fire threatens such destruction as would constitute a major disaster. FMAG declarations operate on a 24-hour, real time basis to provide assistance through emergency protective measures, which may include grants, equipment, supplies, and personnel for the mitigation and management of a fire threatening a major disaster. This year, FEMA has provided assistance in the form of FMAG declarations for over 30 fires across 13 States. This assistance includes support of the States of California, Florida, Georgia, and Utah, all of which have experienced extreme fire activity this year. California received seven FMAGs, including one in support of the Angora Fire which significantly threatened the communities around Lake Tahoe. The States of Florida and Georgia received a combined total of 11 FMAGs to assist with their unprecedented early fire season. Utah received assistance for two of the largest fires in the State's history. These grants were declared within hours of being requested, often in the middle of the night, to make available Federal assistance to protect citizens and critical facilities. These efforts demonstrate FEMA's ability to support and help facilitate an effective unified response with other Federal agencies, and State and local officials.

All of these actions were taken by a well led, motivated, and professional FEMA workforce that has embraced and enhanced the vision and reality of a new FEMA.

Projections from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the 2007 hurricane season indicate we can expect a likely range of 13-17 named storms, 7-10 hurricanes, and 3-5 major hurricanes [categories 3-4-5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale]. We must be prepared to respond to any such storm – whether it strikes our heartland or just skirts our shores. Even storms that don't make landfall impact our plans and activities.

FEMA has prepared for an active 2007 hurricane season by taking the following actions:

1. Established a heightened posture of hurricane preparedness across all 18 hurricane impact risk States, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands;
2. Engaged our State and Federal partners in more thorough and informed hurricane planning; and
3. Built up FEMA's operational capabilities to provide effective response and recovery.

Establishing a Heightened Posture of Hurricane Preparedness

FEMA is placing its primary emphasis on strengthening the Federal-State partnership to better ensure that we are able to achieve shared objectives for a safe, coordinated and effective response and recovery effort.

First, we are emphasizing the States' primary responsibility to provide for the safety and security of their citizens. The States must take the lead to ensure they and their local jurisdictions are prepared for the hurricane season.

The various State Emergency Management Agencies coordinate the overall management of an emergency to include requests for support and resources from other State agencies, from other States under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and for supplemental assistance from the Federal government. The EMAC process offers State-to-State assistance during Governor-declared states of emergency. EMAC offers a responsive and straightforward system under which States can send personnel and equipment to help disaster relief efforts in other States. When one State's resources are overwhelmed, other States can help to fill the shortfalls through EMAC.

The strength of EMAC and the quality that distinguishes it from other plans and compacts lies in its governance structure, its relationship with Federal organizations, States, counties, territories, and regions, and the ability to move just about any resource from one State to another.

Secondly, by advancing the concept of engaged partnership, FEMA will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the State—we are there to support, fill gaps, and help to achieve a

successful response and recovery. In the past, our system was cued to sequential failure: where the State held back until the local jurisdiction was overwhelmed, and the Federal system held back until the State was overwhelmed. This approach, evident in the response to Katrina, caused delays in delivering support. Under “engaged partnership,” FEMA has strengthened the relationship between FEMA Regional Administrators and State Emergency Managers to focus on more deliberate disaster planning. In preparation for this hurricane season, we engaged each of the 18 hurricane impact States (Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas), the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Territories in a focused effort to identify strengths and weaknesses. We are engaged now in discussions with hurricane-prone areas of our Nation to better understand and address gaps and develop mitigation strategies to ensure successful response and recovery. FEMA is prepared to allocate commodities and enlist the assistance of other Departments and agencies as needed to ensure a strong response to a call for assistance. As a result of our joint planning, we can now anticipate needs much better than we have before and provide support more expeditiously.

Third, FEMA has extended its reach across the span of Federal agencies to ensure the smooth and responsive coordination of Federal support when it is needed. The most visible demonstration of that coordination is the array of Federal capabilities contained in our “playbook” of pre-scripted mission assignments. This playbook represents an examination of the range of Federal support that may be requested in response to a disaster. It also includes advance interagency coordination to ensure delivery of that capability when called upon in time of need. At present, we have developed and coordinated 187 pre-scripted mission assignments with as many as 21 Federal agencies. Up to an additional 40 are still under review. This support ranges from heavy-lift helicopters from the Department of Defense (DOD), to generators from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to Disaster Medical Assistance Teams from Health and Human Services (HHS) and Emergency Road Clearing Teams from the U.S. Forest Service. These pre-scripted mission assignments will result in more rapid and responsive delivery of Federal support.

Disaster response support is coordinated through one or more of the National Response Plan’s (NRP) 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). The ESFs serve as the primary operational-level mechanism supporting FEMA in providing State and local disaster assistance in functional areas such as transportation, communications, public works and engineering, firefighting, mass care, housing, human services, public health and medical services, search and rescue, agriculture, and energy. The signatories to the NRP provide substantial disaster response assistance in their areas of expertise and provide operational support for FEMA when assigned missions to support the disaster response. In addition, FEMA can “surge” its own teams and assets into an area in anticipation of an approaching storm or event that is expected to cause a significant impact and result in a

declared emergency or major disaster, and can turn to other DHS components such as the U.S. Coast Guard for assistance. The surge capability allows FEMA to position assets prior to the event to enable a quick response, but actual assistance cannot be provided until the Governor requests and the President approves a disaster declaration.

An example of the use of the ESFs is the Greensburg, Kansas disaster. Within the first 72 hours after the tornado devastated Greensburg, FEMA coordinated the efforts of numerous Federal agencies in their ESF roles under the NRP. The DHS/National Communication System (ESF 2) worked with State and local officials to reestablish communications infrastructure, advising local government as necessary, and providing needed technical assistance. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ESF 3) management team for critical facility restoration planning was on-site providing technical assistance to State and local governments. Additionally, Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) in the form of 13 small Mobile Emergency Operations Vehicles (MEOVs) and one large MEOV were deployed to Greensburg for communications and command and control support. The larger MEOV was provided to serve as the Unified Command Post.

To further strengthen our partnerships, FEMA is actively engaged with State governments and other Federal partners in joint exercises as we prepare for the 2007 Hurricane Season. During the first week in May, FEMA tested the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and its response operations during a Department of Defense-sponsored exercise called “Ardent Sentry - Northern Edge,” which simulated a Category 3 hurricane striking Newport, Rhode Island.

Also, on June 18 and 19, 2007, DHS’s National Communications System (NCS) hosted a national level communications response teams training session that was prepared and delivered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). FEMA and other DHS components participated with the General Services Administration (GSA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Defense's United States Northern Command, National Guard, and state and local emergency management officials. FEMA now has three national teams of 37 government personnel each (staffed from FEMA as well as other Federal agencies), trained and ready for deployment. FEMA has accomplished its goal to have teams ready to respond to three (2 major, 1 medium) simultaneous events. These three teams are prepared to provide emergency communications tactical support and to assist industry in infrastructure restoration.

Engaging with State and Federal Partners in More Thorough and Informed Preparedness Planning

For 2007, FEMA has taken a tiered approach to planning. First, we engaged each of the 18 hurricane impact States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands in focused hurricane planning. This planning included the employment of a Gap Analysis Tool that informed the process. Second, we continue to provide specific attention to the Gulf Coast States by pursuing, for the first time, regional

development of a Gulf Coast Evacuation Plan. Third, we continue to pursue specific planning efforts with our partners in the State of Louisiana, in recognition of their condition following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Lastly, we are focusing Catastrophic Disaster Response Planning on hurricane scenarios in southeastern Louisiana and the State of Florida.

Hurricane Gap Analysis Program

FEMA is working with hurricane prone States and conducting gap analyses that serve as the basis for better understanding vulnerabilities in a more consistent manner. The Gap Analysis Program, developed in coordination with the State of New York Emergency Management Office/New York City Office of Emergency Management, is providing FEMA and its partners at both the State and local levels in the hurricane-prone regions of the country with a snapshot of asset gaps to determine the level of Federal support that will potentially be needed during a category 3 hurricane.

The initiative, a joint effort between State Emergency Management representatives and FEMA Regional representatives, involved conducting a series of structured discussions with local jurisdictions to better understand potential disaster response asset gaps in the critical disaster response areas of debris removal, evacuation, sheltering, interim housing, healthcare facilities, commodity distribution, communications, and fuel. The discussions provided an opportunity for local jurisdictions to ask specific questions of Federal and State officials and identify issues of critical concern that can be addressed as part of long-term preparedness programs.

Specific gaps were determined by identifying a series of requirements in each critical area within each location and then subtracting the corresponding capabilities for meeting those requirements for each location.

The initial data collection phase of this program concluded on June 1, 2007, and the results serve as the ongoing basis for jointly addressing the identified shortfalls and issues with our State partners. As this initiative has progressed, we have noted a steady decrease in the initial shortfalls and vulnerabilities identified in areas such as debris removal contracts; transportation contracts; identification of potential shelters and evacuation routes; identifying points of distribution; and provision of specific commodities such as tarps, generators, and cots.

Although our initial use of this method is focused on the 2007 hurricane season, this process is applicable to all hazards. FEMA is reviewing, revising, and improving the program to reflect our experiences and lessons learned. One of the major revisions will link participation to the allocation of grant funding. Revisions to both the questions and the categories will help FEMA to do a better job of capturing the true capabilities in an all hazards environment. .

As stated before, the new FEMA has made a conscious effort to focus broadly on all 18 hurricane-prone States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and Territories to prepare for the 2007 Hurricane Season. Today, FEMA continues to work closely with each of the 18 State emergency management organizations in the hurricane-prone States using a consistent set of measures and tools to evaluate strengths and vulnerabilities.

Modeling is also an essential element of FEMA's planning efforts for different circumstances. FEMA is coordinating with the DHS Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate to adapt modeling tools to large metropolitan areas. For example, many tools utilize a standard figure for population per square mile, often resulting in skewed data for areas with high-rise apartment buildings. The work with S&T is focusing on adapting these modeling tools to urban environments.

As the use of the Hurricane Gap Analysis Tool becomes more mature, FEMA plans to incorporate additional modeling capabilities to validate the data received and to forecast needs based on different variables. FEMA's current hurricane planning efforts rely heavily on existing modeling tools such as:

- HurrEvac (Hurricane Evacuation) to enable tracking hurricanes and assist in evacuation decision making;
- NOAA's SLOSH (Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes) to enable estimates of storm surge heights and winds resulting from historical, hypothetical, or predicted hurricanes by taking into account pressure, size, forward speed, track, and winds;
- HAZUS (Hazards U.S.) established by FEMA to assess risk and forecast losses based on population characteristics and buildings;
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' modeling tools which rely on geospatial capabilities to provide estimates of debris volumes; water, ice, and commodity needs; and the number of people within the households likely within hurricane force winds; and
- NISAC (National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center) advanced modeling and simulation capabilities to analyze critical infrastructure interdependencies and vulnerabilities.

Gulf Coast State Evacuation Plan –

FEMA has also assisted the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in the development of a Gulf Coast Evacuation Plan that extends to adjacent States who may host Gulf Coast evacuees. The purpose of this effort is to synchronize separate State evacuation plans to create a more cohesive and organized effort. Teams are engaging with each State, identifying requirements and capabilities, and working to develop a plan that integrates shelter planning with transportation planning. The result will be a timely, better organized, and better coordinated evacuation by those with their own transportation and for those who need assistance to evacuate by bus or air. FEMA has established a

Warm Cell Joint Field Office (JFO) in Baton Rouge that is conducting extensive planning for a mass evacuation of the 12 coastal parishes of Louisiana. These plans, closely coordinated with Louisiana State and local plans, will ensure that a comprehensive evacuation plan including transportation, sheltering, mass care, and, ultimately, return, is ready to support Louisiana if needed.

Coordinating with Louisiana

Recognizing Louisiana's continuing fragile situation, we are collaboratively assessing requirements, State capabilities and the potential need for Federal assistance. Louisiana is better prepared than last year—as a result of applying lessons learned and investing some of its own resources—but still needs assistance in finding shelter space in adjacent States, ensuring sufficient transportation resources to conduct a timely and effective evacuation, position commodities, and caring for those with critical medical needs. As mentioned above, a comprehensive evacuation planning effort in Louisiana is tying all aspects of evacuation (transportation, sheltering, mass care, and return) together into one system. A Transportation Management Unit that has been established as part of this evacuation planning effort is taking advantage of the expertise of intermodal planners detailed from the bus, rail, and aircraft industries, key federal partners from the U.S. Department of Transportation, contract and operational transportation planners from the Department of Defense, and FEMA operational planners. They are assessing the overall transportation needs and developing a flexible plan to meet State requirements using all available means of transportation.

Catastrophic Disaster Planning Initiatives

We are also working with 13 southeastern Louisiana parishes (including the City of New Orleans) that were selected as the initial geographic focus area for FEMA's Catastrophic Disaster Planning Initiative because of their vulnerability to hurricane disasters. Substantial planning activity continues with the State of Louisiana and its parishes in planning and preparing for the 2007 Hurricane Season.

In addition, FEMA is using scenario-driven workshops to enhance the State of Florida's capability to respond to a Category 5 Hurricane making landfall in Southern Florida. This is a two-phased project. Phase One focuses on developing regional response and recovery plans, including evacuation planning, for the counties and communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee (in the event of failure of the Herbert Hoover Dike). Initial plans have been developed and being reviewed and fine-tuned. Phase Two will address the effects of a Category 5 hurricane striking south Florida. The end product for Phase Two will be standardized and comprehensive catastrophic Category 5 hurricane disaster functional response and recovery plans for the State of Florida and responding Federal agencies. Phase Two will be completed by September 30, 2008. These plans will also be used as planning templates for other large urban areas.

Similarly, FEMA has undertaken Catastrophic Disaster Planning in eight States along the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). This initiative addresses the earthquake National Planning Scenario and multiple functional areas such as evacuation, including transportation/staging and distribution of critical resources; command and control; saving lives; search and rescue; temporary medical care; sheltering; hosting; access control and reentry; power; water and ice distribution; volunteer and donations management; hazardous materials; external affairs; business, industry and government partnerships; private sector coordination; critical infrastructure; and exercises of the plan, to include application of the Catastrophic Incident Supplement to the NRP. Several workshops have already been conducted and are planned and a draft Interim Contingency Plan for a NMSZ catastrophic event has been developed. Catastrophic Disaster Planning has also been initiated to address the effects of catastrophic earthquakes in California.

Additionally, in the recent supplemental appropriation, Congress allocated \$35 million in funding to tier one Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) cities for coordinated regional catastrophic planning. Catastrophic planning requires resources and effort at all levels of government and with our private and non-profit sector partners. The NCR and the greater FEMA Region III provide the ideal environment to develop a method that brings together all of the catastrophic planning efforts and resources into a comprehensive and coordinated program. In the NCR FEMA will demonstrate how FEMA can blend all catastrophic planning initiatives into true capability that will serve the people of this region during a catastrophic event.

Next, it is important to understand what FEMA is doing to build its operational capabilities to improve its response and recovery capabilities in support of State and local efforts.

Building FEMA's Operational Capabilities to Provide Effective Response and Recovery

In addition to the many action items already described to better prepare for the 2007 Hurricane Season, FEMA's comprehensive strategy for improving its disaster response efforts includes a 2007 Hurricane Contingency Plan, a new operational planning unit, an Interagency Agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency, Total Asset Visibility (TAV), development of a new generation of interagency emergency response teams, and mass evacuation planning.

2007 Hurricane Contingency Plan (CONPLAN)

The 2007 Hurricane CONPLAN provides the operational incident management framework to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of hurricanes impacting the United States. The CONPLAN provides guidance on actions that will be executed by Federal Departments and Agencies.

This document was developed in collaboration with all of FEMA's National Response Plan partners for the Emergency Support Functions- and addresses the coordinated national-level Federal preparedness, response and initial recovery operations that will be used to support State, local, Territorial and Tribal government entities impacted by a hurricane or tropical storm.

New Operational Planning Unit Capabilities

FEMA has hired staff for a new "Current Operational Planning Unit" (Planning Unit). Located in FEMA's Headquarters, the Planning Unit will provide sophisticated operational analyses of both ongoing and potential situations to ensure the most effective response to all disasters. With the new staff, FEMA is building its core operational planning competency to provide greater depth of experience and more capability to perform critical disaster response operational analyses, prepare operational plans, and conduct crisis action planning to ensure that the Agency can lead, coordinate and support a national all-hazard emergency management response.

Specifically, the Current Operational Planning Unit will:

- Provide National and Regional operational planning guidance and coordination;
- Coordinate the execution of all hazard contingency plans at the operational level;
- Provide forecasting and analysis of potential events;
- Assist FEMA Regions in operational planning at the regional level; and
- Lead the development of DHS and FEMA hazard-specific contingency plans.

Eventually, planners will also be hired for the FEMA Regions to provide this capability to those areas. Currently, FEMA Operational planners are directly supporting planning efforts for the mass evacuation of Louisiana in the event of a catastrophic hurricane, as well as a mass migration event in the Caribbean. Other projects have included supporting Region 5 in preparation and execution of scenarios during exercise Ardent Sentry. In the coming months, FEMA Operational planners will be hired to directly support planning requirements in the Regions such as planning for hurricanes, pandemic influenza, and flooding events.

FEMA/DLA/Army Corps of Engineers Coordination

FEMA and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) have entered into a collaborative partnership, via an Interagency Agreement, to optimize the planning, ordering, storing and replenishing of certain commodities such as emergency meals and fuel, and develop a roadmap for larger scaled supply chain initiatives.

The FEMA/DLA partnership has improved FEMA's immediate response and logistics capabilities by reducing the acquisition and distribution time, as well as the

replenishment lead-time. The partnership has also improved FEMA's day-to-day supply chain operations by creating repeatable, sustainable processes for planning and execution at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Through this agreement DLA will procure, maintain, transport, and stage commodities. DLA currently provides visibility of all commodities shipped to disaster locations, logistic centers or other locations as directed, from the initial receipt of the order until ownership passes to FEMA.

For other commodities, such as ice, FEMA will rely on local purchase or vendor managed arrangements through the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers who has the lead mission for ice support under the National Response Plan. The Corps' advanced contract initiatives and predictive model forecasts for commodities are a robust and reliable capability that makes them the source of choice for ice support. The new Corps ice contract guarantees 3,000,000 pounds of ice within 24 hours of receiving a task order and an increase in deliveries over the next 48 hours to sustain a support capability of 1 million persons per day.

TAV Program

FEMA Logistics has identified areas for improving its end-to-end supply chain to deliver critical supplies at the right time, in the right quantity and to the right location. FEMA is implementing industry best practices for supply chain management and an automated system that is improving information flow by providing real-time visibility into orders and shipment of critical supplies during emergency response efforts.

Launched during the 2006 hurricane season, the Total Asset Visibility (TAV) Program oversees, directs and manages the design and implementation of an initial capability pilot system to monitor and view the orders and movement of select commodities.

Currently, the TAV Program provides FEMA with the ability to: (1) manage and view orders and inventory of select commodities, and (2) track the location of trailers carrying the commodities distributed from the FEMA Logistics Centers (LCs) and select vendors to field sites. The long-term vision for the TAV Program is to engage external emergency management stakeholders – from State, local and tribal governments and other federal agencies to non-government agencies and vendors – in the entire FEMA supply chain. These activities cover requests for critical supplies to tracking shipments and delivery to people in need during times of emergency. Stakeholders would have real-time visibility into the status of requests and locations of shipments in transit.

FEMA recognizes that certain types of resources may be required immediately after a disaster by State and local governments in order for them to adequately respond.

If State or local governments, and State partners, are unable to supply these resources, then FEMA will coordinate the provision of Federal commodities to ensure that resources are in place in order to supplement State and local response efforts during the immediate

phase of response activities. FEMA has initiated the Pre-Positioned Disaster Supply (PPDS) program to position life-saving and life sustaining disaster equipment and supplies in modular containers as close to potential disaster sites as prudent, in order to substantially reduce the initial response time to incidents.

Enhanced Response Teams

As mentioned previously, FEMA is developing the next generation of rapidly deployable interagency emergency response teams called Incident Management Assist Teams (IMATs). These teams will support the emergent needs of State and local jurisdictions; possess the capability to provide initial situational awareness for Federal decision-makers; and support the initial establishment of a unified command. These teams will ultimately provide the three national-level response teams and regional-level emergency response “strike” teams required by PKEMRA.

The teams are still in the design and development phase, and decisions on team assets, equipment, and expected capabilities have not yet been finalized. The teams will subsume the existing mission and capabilities of the Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRSTs) and Emergency Response Teams (ERTs). The mission and capabilities of the IMATs will incorporate leadership, emergency management doctrine, and operational communications concepts similar to those in the FIRSTs and ERTs. The national-level and regional-level teams will be staffed with a core of full-time employees, unlike the ERTs, which have been staffed on a collateral duty basis. IMAT teams will be fully compliant with NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS); and will train and exercise as an integral unit.

Principal Federal Officials

A Principal Federal Official (PFO) may be designated to represent the Secretary of Homeland Security. The PFO ensures that overall Federal domestic incident management efforts are well coordinated and effective. The PFO does not direct or replace the incident command structure, nor does the PFO have direct authority over other Federal and State officials. For example, during a terrorist incident, the local FBI Special Agent-in-Charge coordinates with other members of the law enforcement community and works in conjunction with the PFO.

The PFO, if one is named, is a member of the JFO Coordination Group. This group also includes either a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), who manages and coordinates Federal resource support activities related to Stafford Act disasters and emergencies, or a Federal Resource Coordinator, who performs similar functions for incidents that do not involve Stafford Act declarations. Depending on the incident, other agency officials are added to the Coordination Group, such as the Senior Federal Law Enforcement Official.

Mass Evacuation Incident Annex to the National Response Plan

As part of incorporating lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, a Mass Evacuation Incident Annex to the NRP is under development. The Mass Evacuation Incident Annex will provide an overview of evacuation functions and agency roles and responsibilities. It also will provide overall guidelines to enable evacuation of large numbers of people in incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response through the NRP ESFs. This new annex will describe how Federal support resources are integrated with State, local, and tribal efforts. Communication linkages to sheltering facilities, special needs of evacuees, and addressing the need for evacuation of both companion and service animals are just a few of the issues addressed in the new annex.

Improved Delivery of Disaster Assistance

FEMA is making significant progress in improving its delivery of disaster assistance as well. FEMA's Disaster Assistance Directorate's planning and capability building initiatives include enhancing mass care capability by improving the National Shelter System and developing better tools for coordinating and tracking donations and volunteers; greatly increasing disaster victim registration capabilities while enhancing protections against waste, fraud and abuse; developing a national disaster housing strategy and improving operational planning for providing temporary housing in a catastrophic disaster; establishing a case management program; updating ESF- 6 Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services standard operating procedures; developing debris estimation technology and monitoring methodology and enhancing state and local debris operations capabilities; and, improving our capability to conduct operations planning for long term disaster operations.

Emergency Evacuation, Shelter, and Housing

FEMA's most pressing priorities for planning for recovery from a catastrophic disaster event have been *emergency evacuation, shelter and housing*. In 2004, FEMA completed an initial Catastrophic Disaster Housing Strategy, which proposed several initiatives to increase FEMA's capability to provide assistance to individuals and households following an extraordinary or catastrophic disaster. The strategy provided the principles and recommended strategies that establish the framework for the catastrophic disaster housing recovery planning being done today. Key needs identified at that time included the following: an expandable disaster registration intake and applicant assistance process; the ability to provide immediate benefits payments; a plan for assisting applicants to temporarily relocate to outside the disaster area; and a strategy and prepared public messages to provide victims with information about assistance.

- **Mass Evacuee Support Planning:** The 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes caused several hundred thousand residents to evacuate to over forty States, many for prolonged time periods. Cities such as Houston, Oklahoma City, Atlanta, and

Baton Rouge received thousands of evacuees requiring immediate shelter, food, other basic assistance, as well as longer term services. In June 2006, FEMA published “Recovery Strategy RS-001, Mass Sheltering and Housing Assistance.” This strategy addresses many contingencies for providing sheltering and housing assistance for declared emergencies and major disasters. In addition, FEMA is undertaking more detailed mass evacuee support planning. This planning will also assist State and local governments to plan and prepare for hosting large displaced populations. The project includes FEMA development of an evacuee registration and tracking capability, implementation plans for federal evacuation support to states, emergency sheltering guidance, and direct planning assistance to potential host States and communities.

- **The National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System and National Emergency Child Locator Center:** As defined in PKEMRA, these capabilities will address the reunification of displaced persons and activities to locate missing children during disasters. For disasters declared by the President, this tracking capability will assist FEMA, the Department of Justice and the American Red Cross in further developing and implementing methods for quickly identifying and reuniting missing and separated children and family members during a disaster.
- **Improving Shelter Management and Accountability:** FEMA and the American Red Cross, the nation’s largest operator of major congregate shelters during disasters, are working together to implement the National Shelter System (NSS). The first phase of the NSS was developed through a FEMA/American Red Cross partnership to provide a web-based data system to support shelter management, reporting, and facility identification activities. The system is intended for use by all agencies that provide shelter services during disasters to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the shelter populations and available shelter capacity. In addition, this system will provide visibility on large shelter populations and position FEMA to provide targeted registration assistance to disaster victims. Outreach and training for Federal, State, and local authorities in use of the system is being conducted.
- **Housing Options:** The FEMA Housing Portal was developed to consolidate available rental resources for evacuees from Federal agencies, private organizations, and individuals. The Joint Housing Solutions Group is a dedicated unit to research and document alternatives to traditional temporary housing. They are currently conducting initial baseline field tests of a housing option assessment tool.
- **Expanding Home Inspections Capacity:** FEMA has increased the daily home inspection capacity of FEMA- contracted firms from 7,000 per day to 40,000 per

day through a new contractual agreement. This added capacity – combined with a newly established third party evaluation of inspections performed on victims’ damaged homes – will increase the speed and accuracy of home inspections that determine the FEMA repair and replacement grants for which a victim may be eligible.

- **Development of the Mass Evacuation Incident Supplement to the NRP:** A Mass Evacuation Incident Supplement to the Mass Evacuation Incident Annex to the NRP is also being developed, and it will serve to identify each element of the mass evacuation process and describe both how and by whom the specific responsibilities captured in that process are to be performed. This comprehensive document will include guidance and direction from the time a person is identified as an evacuee until such time that the individual, his or her family, and pets are ready to be placed back into the general population.

Applicant Registration and Management

In 2006 and 2007, FEMA has focused its Recovery planning and capability building efforts on improving applicant management systems; expanding registration intake and processing capacity; increasing fraud controls; supporting displaced populations; identifying alternative forms of temporary housing; and debris management planning. FEMA has made significant progress in increasing its capability to provide assistance to individuals, particularly in the areas of registration, applicant processing, and providing assistance.

- **Doubling Registration Capacity to 200,000 Per Day:** During the days and weeks following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA surpassed 100,000 registrations a day, shattering all previous records of intake. While call center capacity was increased to its highest levels ever, FEMA is pursuing even more robust contract and contingency surge capabilities that will quickly allow for rapid expansion to a registration intake capacity of up to 200,000 per day. FEMA’s Internet-based registration capability has been increased by improving accessibility, allowing FEMA to handle more registrations than ever before. This increased capacity will help reduce registration wait times and FEMA Helpline information delays following a major disaster.
- **Deployable Mobile Registration Intake Centers (MRICs) Pilot:** Recognizing many disaster victims may be stranded or located in congregate shelters without communications, and unable to register for assistance, FEMA has established a new registration pilot program that pushes registration capabilities directly into the field. For the 2007 hurricane season, FEMA will have the ability to deploy Mobile Registrations Intake Centers immediately to congregate shelters and provide an on-site capability to quickly register for FEMA assistance.

Debris Management Planning

Management of contaminated debris is of particular concern for terrorist events, but is also an issue in most large natural disasters. An Interagency Work Group to coordinate Federal agency management of contaminated debris began work in 2005 just prior to Hurricane Katrina. The Work Group is developing further Federal contaminated debris operational procedure guidance. This project is analyzing the implications of a catastrophic incident on contaminated debris management programs and policies and will assist FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, the Coast Guard, and other federal stakeholders to better define their operational roles and inter-relationships. FEMA's Public Assistance Program is also undertaking two catastrophic planning initiatives focusing on increasing State and local debris management capabilities through planning and enhancing Federal capabilities to estimate debris volumes following a disaster to assist in operational planning and cost estimation.

Increasing Fraud Controls

FEMA has also taken steps to implement new, stronger controls pertaining to identity and occupancy verification of applicants for disaster assistance. Examples of controls implemented include: deployment of a new Internet registration application that disallows any duplicate registrations; added identity proofing to the call center registration application so that all Individual and Households Program (IHP) registrations are subjected to the same stringent criteria, including verification of social security numbers and occupancy requirements; data-marking any applications in FEMA's database that fail identity proofing so they are flagged for manual review and denied automated payment; real-time interaction between the FEMA Service Representative and the applicant during registration to ensure the data entered that resulted in a failed identity check is correct before accepting the application; working with FEMA's data contractor to flag any addresses that are not residential addresses in order to prevent automated payments without an on-site inspection verification of address and residency; and flagging at-risk social security numbers to identify potential fraud.

Conclusion

I believe we have made real progress at FEMA and are prepared for the 2007 Hurricane Season. Our reorganization efforts—based on our internal transformation and the implementation of PKEMRA—will bear fruit across our disaster operations and assistance programs. Today, I have focused on how FEMA's reorganization has contributed to:

1. Establishing a heightened posture of hurricane preparedness;
2. Engaging our State and Federal partners in more thorough and informed hurricane planning; and,
3. Building FEMA's operational capabilities to provide effective response and recovery.

There is a lot more going on inside FEMA than the things mentioned that will also contribute to enhanced performance and organizational success.

Although all disasters are local, FEMA must play a more proactive role in understanding vulnerabilities so we can assist the localities in being better prepared to respond. As I hope you will see by today's testimony—we are being more proactive. By leaning further forward to coordinate the federal response, we can better serve all Americans.

Today, FEMA:

- Has a stronger structure in place – and will continue to improve our organization through planning, training and the hiring of experienced and dedicated staff;
- Has created engaged partnerships in support of State and local governments;
- Has supported and helped to facilitate an effective unified command with other Federal agencies, and State and local officials;
- Has engaged with hurricane-prone States to gain a better understanding of their vulnerabilities;
- Has improved logistics and communications capabilities to improve response; and
- Has enhanced Disaster Assistance capabilities for recovery efforts.

Of course, we are not done yet. There is still much work to do.

But if our progress over the past year is any indication, I believe we are on the right track to fulfilling our vision to become the nation's preeminent emergency management and preparedness agency.

I am especially proud of the men and women who work at FEMA. They have put their hearts and souls into rebuilding this agency. The men and women of FEMA are dedicated to the mission of disaster and victim recovery, and staunchly committed to improving the speed, efficiency, and accountability with which we perform that mission. That commitment is not only to the victims and communities of those disasters that we expect to face in the future, but to those victims and communities still struggling with the personal, professional, and social consequences and challenges of past disasters.

I would also like to take this opportunity to provide an update on FEMA's efforts with formaldehyde health concerns and demonstrate our continued dedication to the health and safety of travel trailer and mobile home occupants.

Over the last two months, FEMA has significantly increased its focus on formaldehyde-related health concerns raised by Gulf Coast disaster victims. These individuals reside in FEMA-provided travel trailers and mobile homes in the Gulf States.

Formaldehyde is a common indoor air pollutant that can be found in nearly all homes and buildings. It is a colorless gas that is released into the home from a variety of indoor sources. Formaldehyde can also be found in a variety of materials used in home construction and products for everyday living. FEMA has received a relatively small but meaningful number of inquiries from residents of FEMA trailers who have had medical symptoms possibly related to formaldehyde fumes.

On July 20, 2007, I announced several steps FEMA has taken to address these concerns and to work more closely with residents who may have concerns about formaldehyde exposure. These include:

Air Quality Testing and Research. Pursuant to a plan under development for several weeks, health experts at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Homeland Security's Office of Health Affairs will conduct a preliminary field study that will test air quality conditions in FEMA-purchased housing units under real-life conditions. In addition, the CDC team is comprehensively reviewing known research in order to provide FEMA with advice about the safety of environmental conditions in travel trailers. We are also looking into effective engineering solutions that may be available to remove environmental pollutants from the trailers.

Additional Outreach to Travel Trailer Occupants. Beginning on July 21, 2007, FEMA distributed a formaldehyde and housing fact sheet to the occupants of each FEMA travel trailer and mobile home in the four Gulf States. Currently 64,805 households occupy these units in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Ninety-seven percent of these units are located in Louisiana and Mississippi. This fact sheet provides basic information about formaldehyde, its possible medical effects and contacts for further assistance. Similar information was provided to residents of all FEMA trailers in the Gulf last year. The new brochure is also available at www.fema.gov.

Dedicated Toll-Free Help Line. Beginning on Saturday, July 21, 2007, FEMA opened a toll-free telephone line to serve residents of its travel trailers and mobile homes in the Gulf States. Operators from CDC and FEMA will be available to answer questions about the formaldehyde-related issues and associated FEMA housing concerns. The toll-free number is 1-866-562-2381 (TTY 1-800-462-7585).

Medical Community Outreach. The DHS Chief Medical Officer will contact state health officials in the region to share information about FEMA's communications with occupants of FEMA trailers and mobile homes.

Thank you for your continued support and the opportunity to discuss how FEMA is prepared for the current 2007 Hurricane Season and other potential major disasters or emergencies. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.